

HEAD TURNER!

"I have always used my body as means of expression,"
says the disarmingly beautiful Michelle Brannan

PROFILE BY **JOHN PLUMMER**

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Michelle won the very first bikini contest held under IFBB rules in the UK almost a year ago to the day. Since then she has made a name for herself as the nation's premier bikini competitor and has placed fifth at the IFBB European Championships.

One of the most striking aspects of her performances is how confident she seems on stage. Other women may have nicely toned and tanned bodies but they haven't got Michelle's self-assured strut; she takes to the stage as if she owns it and has such a commanding presence you just can't



take your eyes off her. And with a figure like hers, why would you want to?

So it comes as no surprise to discover that Michelle's hypnotic stage presence has something to do with her years of dancing, and we don't mean the kind of drunken dancing you see in clubs on a Saturday night but international competitions.

"I am qualified to teach lambada, which is a very sensual partner dance, also known as the forbidden dance. It is very sexy and the contact with the partner is close," says Michelle.

She also loves salsa and has performed with the European salsa team champions in Athens. In short, she has the body and she knows how to use it. Bikini is a natural progression for someone who expresses herself this way.

Michelle's goal now is to become Britain's first IFBB bikini pro and the inaugural UK champion. Much will depend on how she did in the three shows she was



MICHELLE'S STATS

NAME: Michelle Brannan

DATE OF BIRTH: 1st June, 1982

PLACE OF BIRTH: Basingstoke

LIVES: London, UK

HEIGHT: 165 cm

WEIGHT: 51.5 kg

COMPETITION HIGHLIGHT: Representing UK at IFBB Amateur European Championships in Russia May 2011

AMBITION: To earn an IFBB pro card and compete at the Olympia

TRAINING ADVICE: Make a plan and stick to it; every day do something that takes you a step closer to your goals.

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due to compete in during October – the UK Championships, the Arnold Classic Europe and the World Championships.

Whatever the judges think, the public's verdict on Michelle and the kind of beach body look she is promoting through the new bikini class is already clear.

"Generally I get a positive response to how I look," she says, somewhat unnecessarily.

"Men naturally seem to like it because although I'm fit I am still quite curvy but this means women quite like it too. My figure is not masculine or too unachievable-looking. It feels great to be fit and feel good about myself. It's empowering for a woman to work out and look after herself."

Amen to that. And if more women follow Michelle's example and try to achieve the bikini body look, those grey British beaches from Blackpool to Bournemouth will never be the same again. **FLEX**

